



BLUE RIDGE CHAPTER

OF THE

VIRGINIA WILDFLOWER PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Vol. 5, No. 1

January 1988

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR 1988

- Feb. 13 -** Field Trip. Meet at old Mick or Mack on Rt. 221, just South of Cave Spring Corners - 10 A.M. Bring bag lunch.
- Feb. 22 -** General membership meeting - 7 P.M., Center in the Square. There will be a seed exchange. If you have been collecting, bring some to share.
- Mar. 26 -** Field trip to Arcadia. Meet at Winn-Dixie on Route 11 near Truckstops of America - 10 A.M. Bring a bag lunch.
- Apr. 9 -** Science Museum of Western Virginia's trip to the N. C. Botanical Gardens. Contact them for details. Phone 342-5710
- Apr. 17 -** Field trip in Lynchburg at 1:30 P.M.. Sponsored jointly by Lynchburg Stream and Valleys and the BRC, VWPS. Details to follow.
- Apr. 23, 24 -** Science Museum has a Blue Ridge Parkway Wildflower Walk. Contact them for details.
- Apr. 25 -** General membership meeting at 7 P.M. Bobby Toler will be teaching Wildflower Photography.
- Apr. 29 -** Science Museum of Western Virginia Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage. If you can help lead a walk, please contact us or the Science Museum.
- May 1 -**
- May 6-8 -** Trip to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Details to follow.
- May 14 -** Field trip to the Peaks of Otter, led by Bobby Toler - a chance to polish the skills learned at the April meeting. Details to follow.
- May 21 -** Annual plant sale. Rain date is May 28. Details to follow.
- June 3-5 -** Shenandoah Wildlife Festival, Lynchburg.
- June 10-11 -** Blue Ridge Chapter of Virginia Wildflower Society Wildflower Week-end
- June 27 -** General Membership Meeting, 7 P.M.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

DATE: February 22, 1988

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

PLACE: Multi Purpose Room - Center in the Square

Guest Speaker: Peggy Spiegel - Attracting Birds to Your Backyard

Mr. Bill Tanger: Friends of Roanoke River

Seed Exchange. If you have collected any bring them to share.

Come and Bring a Friend.

Letter From The President

Here it is January with the Holidays behind us and the skunk cabbage already up. Hope all had a joyous Holiday Season and are looking forward to a good 1988.

The Board of Directors met on January 10 to put together a list of programs and activities for the upcoming months. (Note the schedule on the front page of this newsletter.) I hope you can find several activities in the list which interest you.

A big "THANK YOU" to all who donated time, expertise, and materials to the chapter operations this last year. You are so generous and so special! Obviously, this is what makes our activities more enjoyable for the group.

Below is the report for 1987 that I sent to the VWPS State Board.

ANNUAL (1987) REPORT FOR THE BLUE RIDGE CHAPTER-VWPS

In the past year, we have undertaken activities that are fun, activities that are educational, and activities that are considered service projects. 1. Field trip to Blackwater Nature Area. 2. Trip to the North Carolina Botanical Garden. 3. Annual Roanoke Wildflower Pilgrimage. 4. Lecture by George Beatty for chapter members, VWCC students and the public. 5. Three day trip to Gatlinburg. 6. Annual Wildflower Sale. 7. Turned in a plant survey and forest composition work to Booker T. Washington National Park. 8. Field trip to Floyd Co. area. 9. Participated in Appalachian Trail conference at Lynchburg with a display of orchids and workshop-field trip activities. 10. Participated in Blue Ridge Parkway Nature activities at Roanoke Mountain - display boards and handouts. 11. Worked on checklist for plants along Appalachian Trail on Catawba Mt. 12. Plant rescue at the Peckhams as forest was to be cut. 13. VWPS Annual Conference in Williamsburg. 14. Display boards at Booker T. Washington National Park for one month. 15. Worked with Virginia Highway Dept. on Kankakee Mallow location near Rt. 311. 16. Have worked with the developers of the Explore Project. 17. Annual chapter outing (picnic) to the Peaks of Otter. 18. Field trip to James River area in Lynchburg. 19. Led walks for approximately 80 teachers from the annual Virginia Science Teachers (K-12) Conference held in Roanoke. 20. Met with National Forest concerning Peter's Mt. Wilderness Area. 21. Helped plan and (intend to) donate money and plants to an Arboretum to be located on Virginia Western Campus. 22. Display boards to Jefferson National Forest for District meeting.

23. Numerous wildflower lecture programs given by members to garden clubs and service organizations. 24. Five newsletters to members. 25. Five chapter membership meetings with programs or workshops.

The above activities have allowed most of our members to find opportunities for them to become involved through the year. Some of our activities have been designed for the more serious plant people while others have been for those individuals not as interested. Our annual wildflower sale brought in about \$1100.

WILDFLOWER NAMES HAVE COLORFUL ORIGINS

From soldier's woundwort to mad-dog skullcap to Queen Anne's lace to stinking Benjamin, the nick-names and common names of wildflowers conjure up vivid imagery relating to their color, smell, size, shape, usage, and real and imagined powers. Often the common name bears a close link with the scientific name, both being based on a particularly apparent property of the plant.

Take, for instance, the bloodroot (*Sanquinaria canadensis*), which exudes from its roots a deep reddish brown sap that was used by the American Indians as a dye and as war paint. The word *sangis*, the root for *Sanguinaria*, means blood. Bloodroot is also known as red puccoon, derived from the Virginia Indian word "pokan," meaning any red-juiced plant used for dyeing.

Hepatica, on the other hand, comes from the Greek word *hepar*, meaning liver, and presents a fine example of the Doctrine of Signatures. Developed by a Swiss physician in 1657, this doctrine was predicated on the resemblance of parts of the plant to parts of the human body. Whatever the plant looked like was what it could be used to treat medicinally. Thus, hepatica was once thought to cure liver problems because its leaves, with some stretch of the imagination, are similar in shape to the liver. The American Indian, unaware of the benefits to that particular organ, believed that hepatica would relieve vertigo, crossed eyes, and coughs.

Toothwort (*Dentaria laciniata*) is another example of the Doctrine of Signatures. Because of the white, tooth-like projections on the root stock for which it was named, toothwort was used as a toothache remedy. There appears to be some disagreement as to the meaning of the word "wort," which derives from "wyr" and is commonly associated with wildflower names. Some feel that it meant root or herb and others that it indicates the plant had medicinal or culinary value.

Trout lily, so named for its speckled

leaves, blooms during trout season in some areas of the country. Also known as fawn lily, dogtooth violet, and adder's tongue because of its long protruding stamens, the trout lily was brewed into tea believed to have beneficial effect on the hiccups. There are also indications that Roman soldiers grew it near their camps and used it as a balm for foot sores and corns. Dutchman's breeches is another wildflower whose name was inspired by its looks, for the shape of the flowerheads is that of miniature white pantaloons hanging upside down from the stems. This plant is also known as blue staggers because it contains an alkaloid which can kill cattle when eaten. Symptoms include trembling, dizziness, and labored breathing.

"Pipsissewa" translates from the Creek Indian word that means "juice that breaks down stone in bladder in small pieces" and refers to the tradition of treating bladder and kidney stones with the plant. Some early American mountaineers also used it to cure urinary problems.

There are many theories as to the origin of the name Solomon's seal, but the most common one reflects the belief that the signet-shaped scars on the root stock resemble a royal seal. Solomon, of course, refers to the wise tenth-century B. C. king of Israel who was said to have known much about medicinal herbs and who put his seal of approval on the plant. When the root is crushed and applied to a bruise it is thought to alleviate the black and blue mark. The root was also used by the American Indians to make flour and pickles.

Behind every wildflower there lies a fascinating tale. Teasel, Queen Anne's lace, pokeweed, and even the lowly dandelion all have stories to tell. For enjoyable reading, try Wildflower Folklore by Laura C. Martin, available at the Audubon Naturalist Society bookshops.

--Leslie Cronin

Reprinted from April 1987
Audubon Naturalist News

This article was featured in the Potowmack Chapter of the VWPS and is reprinted with their permission.

First 1988 Field Trip

On Saturday, February 13, fourteen hardy wildflower "Nuts" braved the low temperatures and winds to go to Bent Mountain to search for skunk cabbage flowers (wind chill factor in Roanoke was -17°). Our search was rewarded with several flowers sticking up through the ice and snow.

After the "quick walk", the group met at the home of Rich and Connie Crites to look at some of Bobby Toler's slides and enjoy some hot cider and hot chocolate.

What Pine is That?

by Dorothy C. Bliss

Among the most valuable of our forest trees are members of the pine family, which also includes spruce, fir and hemlocks. The latter three may be easily distinguished from pines, since eastern pines have two or more needles grouped in bundles or fascicles while the other genera produce their needles singly. Of the eight species of pines that occur in Virginia, two, *Pinus palustris*, Longleaf Pine and *P. serotina*, Swamp or Pond Pine grow naturally in only a few southeastern counties. *P. taeda*, Loblolly Pine, is found in the eastern half of the state and as far west as Albemarle and Buckingham counties. *P. echinata*, Shortleaf, and *P. virginiana*, Scrub Pine, are scattered over much of the state while *P. strobus*, White Pine, *P. pungens*, Table Mountain Pine, and *P. rigida*, Pitch Pine, are more or less restricted to the western half.

Pines are commercially valuable for lumber, pulpwood, paper products, cabinet making, turpentine, fuel and horticultural purposes. Their seeds provide an important food source for many birds including chickadees, quail, wild turkeys, and pine warblers. The young needles and seeds are eaten by chipmunks, mice and squirrels and the white tail deer browse on the needles. These trees also furnish cover and nesting habitat.

The White Pine, our only 5-needled pine, is easily distinguished from the other genera, all of whom have needles in groups of 2's or 3's. The branches occur in whorls around the trunk marking successive years of growth. Because of its graceful habit, rapid growth, hardiness and attractive blue-green foliage, White Pine is extensively used for ornamental purposes. It is attacked

by a serious rust disease that has as its alternate host members of the *Ribes* genus. This disease can be controlled by eradicating the gooseberries and currants within one quarter mile. Also weevils may attack the leading shoot, deforming the symmetrical growth of the tree. Before they were extensively lumbered, these pines attained heights of more than 200 feet. Forests of these giants with their straight towering trunks crowned by attractive blue-green needles must have been a majestic sight.

White Pine, unsurpassed in size and strength, was an extremely important tree in the early days of our country when it was cut for masts for sailing vessels. In the late 17th century, the best White Pines in New England were reserved for the crown and a fine was imposed for anyone cutting these trees. After 1719 the king's surveyors marked these pines with an "R" (Royal) or a broad arrow. I wonder how many fiercely independent colonists obliterated these marks and felled such trees for their own use?

Pitch Pine, a 3-needled pine, is the dominant tree of the New Jersey Pine Barrens and in Virginia occurs chiefly in the western half, especially in dry sandy soil along with Scrub Pine. Because the wood of the Pitch Pine is rich in resin, it is used for kindling and also as torches for coon hunters. Dormant buds under the bark may produce many short leafy branches and in addition Pitch Pine shares with Shortleaf the ability to produce suckers from roots.

Virginia, Scrub or Jersey Pine is a straggling, small tree growing generally on poor soils and common in abandoned fields.

Its wood is knotty and is used mostly for paper pulp and firewood. In contrast, Yellow or Shortleaf Pine is a tall straight tree and, paradoxically, its needles, in 2's and 3's, are longer than those of Scrub Pine.

Pond or Swamp Pine is known in Virginia from only the extreme south-eastern counties on the coastal plain, principally on pond margins and in boggy areas. It is a small slender, slow growing tree that has little commercial value. It is fire resistant and may regenerate from the base following fire. Longleaf Pine, occurring in the southeastern portion of the state, is a beautiful straight tree, characterized by needles up to 18" (45 cm) long. This fire resistant tree is extremely valuable for timber and turpentine.

Loblolly or Old Field Pine is a fast growing pine with relatively long needles up to 9" (25 cm) in length and although the wood is coarse grained, it finds many uses as building material, pulpwood, excelsior and fuel.

Table Mountain Pine, an endemic of the Southern Appalachians, occurs on south-facing slopes, oftentimes appearing deformed and scraggly on exposed sites and shale outcrops. A relatively small tree, it is easily recognized by its large heavy cones with prominent curved prickles and stout twisted needles. It has little commercial value.

Some distinguishing characteristics of Virginia Pines are included in the following chart. Why don't you take this with you on our next field trip and see how many pines you can identify? First check the length and number of needles in each bundle, then look for the cones and compare them with the description (1" = approximately 2.5 cm).

Distinguishing Characteristics of Virginia Pines

Tree	Needles	Cone	Bark	Distribution
White Pine	5 in a bundle 7-13 cm long	Slender, 10-15 cm long, nodding	Branches smooth old bark dark with deep furrows	Western half of the State
Scrub Pine	2's 4-8 cm long twisted	4-6 cm long, scales with a small prickle	Reddish brown broken into shallow plates	Poor soils most of State
Pitch Pine	3's 5-12 cm long stiff, mostly twisted	Egg-shaped 3-9 cm long often clustered, scales tipped with prickles	Rough dark bark	Most of State dry, sandy soil
Shortleaf Pine	2's or 3's 7-13 cm long straight	5 cm long, scales with a short weak prickle	Bark broken into more or less rectangular plates	Over much of State except Southwest
Table Mountain Pine	2's or 3's 4-8 cm long, stout, stiff twisted, sharp pointed	5-9 cm long, whorls of 3 or more, heavy, woody scales with stout recurved spines	Bark in irregular red-brown plates	Mountains & Western half of State, dry ridges
Loblolly Pine	3's or 2's 12-25 cm long slender	6-12 cm long, cone scales with a stout triangular spine	Reddish bark breaking into large plates	Eastern half of State
Long-leaf Pine	3's 20-45 cm long slender	15-25 cm long cylindric, thick scales with short prickles	Thin scaled bark	Few Southeastern counties
Pond or Marsh Pine	3's 12-28 cm long flexible	5-7 cm long top-shaped weak prickle	Flaky dark, red brown	Pond margins Coastal Plain two counties

Lynchburg Area Members

by Dorothy Bliss

Twenty-six members and friends of the Blue Ridge Chapter of the Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society met at Randolph-Macon Woman's College on December 22, 1987. Those present expressed an interest in more field trips near Lynchburg and an occasional evening program. A committee of Dorothy Bliss, Bob Eubank, Kay Harris, Aubrey Neas and Sylvia Whitmore volunteered to implement such a program. Following the discussion, Dorothy Bliss presented a slide show on the Lily Family.

Congratulations to the six new Lynchburg members who have joined the VWPS in the past two months.

Local Activities for March, April, May. Wednesday, March, 30, 7:30 P.M. A slide program entitled *Spring Flora along Blackwater Creek* will be presented by Aubrey Neas, Ranger-Naturalist for Lynchburg. This will be an excellent introduction to our April 17th Field Trip. Martin Science Building, RMWC, Norfolk Ave. Entrance 7:30 P.M.

Sunday, April 17, 1:30 P.M. Spring Wildflower walk along Blackwater Creek, co-sponsored by Friends of Lynchburg Stream Valleys and Blue Ridge Chapter of VWPS. Spend an afternoon enjoying a wealth of wildflowers, including Wild Ginger, Dutchman's Breeches, Fawn Lily, etc., all at our doorstep. Meet at end of Thompson Drive in Lynchburg at 1:30 P.M. Leader: Dorothy Bliss, (804) 845-5665.

Saturday, April 23, 1:15 P.M. Buffalo Creek Nature Trail Along the trail find tiny dwarf ginseng and towering virgin hemlocks. In Lynchburg meet at Forest Plaza West (near bank) at 1:15 P.M. or at Westvaco Parking Area, 2 miles West of Covington on Rt. 24 at 2:00 P.M. Leader: Jan Beyers (804) 847-7573.

Two nature walks sponsored by the Natural Bridge Appalachian Trail Club are described below. Guest are welcome.

Sunday May, 15 at 1:15 P.M. Spring Wildflower Walk. Thunder Ridge to Petites Gap on BRP. Masses of Trillium in bloom present an unforgettable sight along this trail. In Lynchburg meet at Boonsboro Shopping Center (Bank) at 1:15 P.M. or Thunder Ridge Parking Area around 2:00 P.M. Leader: Dorothy Bliss (804) 845-5665.

Sunday May, 22 at 1:15 P.M. Lady's Slipper Walk North on AT from Bear Wallow Gap. A fun hike to count the pink lady's slippers in bloom along the trail! Meet at Forest Plaza West (Bank) in Lynchburg at 1:15 P.M. or at Bear Wallow Gap (BRP MP 90.9) at 2:15 P.M. Leaders: Anita and Everett Crowell (703) 586-2467.

Suggestions for ideas for trips or programs for the Lynchburg area are welcomed by any member of the above committee.

IN MEMORIAM

On January 10, 1988 Jeanette Boone of Sweet Briar, Virginia passed away. She was a retired registrar at Sweet Briar College (1930-1971) and a member of the Blue Ridge Chapter of the Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society.

Dutchman's Pipe

by Frieda Toler

For the October 1987 issue of the Blue Ridge Chapter Newsletter, there was a short article about the Peaks of Otter picnic. It mentioned that the group saw the fruiting structure of the Dutchman's breeches at Thunder Ridge. Well, that statement needs to be corrected. The group really saw the fruiting structure of **Dutchman's pipe**.

This correction aside, let us consider the Dutchman's pipe. It is a member of the Birthwort Family, *Aristolochiaceae*. Dutchman's pipe, *Aristolochia macrophylla* is a perennial vine with alternate heart-shaped leaves which may be from four to eight inches across, though some may be even larger. The interesting flowers are pipe-shaped or S-shaped, brownish purple in color, usually one to two inches long. The calyx flares into three short lobes.



There are no petals, the sepals form the strongly curved pipe-like flower. Bloom time is April through May depending on the elevation, and grows in rich moist woods.



The fruit resembles a small cucumber 5.5-8 cm in length. It is a green capsule often dehiscent basally (parachute like) with numerous large seeds embedded in the tissue of the capsule. The heart-shaped seeds are brown at maturity with a very small embryo and large amounts of endosperm.

The family is almost exclusively tropical with a few members found in the temperate zone. The genus *Aristolochia* contains about 300 species - but again very few are found outside the tropics. Economically, the family is of very little importance.

New Books

NURSERY SOURCES: Native Plants and Wildflowers; staff of the New England Wild Flower Society; 72-page booklet; lists sources for seeds or propagated plants for over 200 desirable wildflowers hardy in Zones 4, 5, and 6; information about 58 nurseries that propagate native plants hardy in Zones 4, 5, and 6, and another 70 nurseries that propagate plants hardy mainly in other zones. (72 pp. 1987), \$4.95 (by mail \$6.45). To order, send your request to the New England Wild Flower Society, Dept. NS, Hemenway Road, Framingham, MA 01701.

PROPAGATION OF WILDFLOWERS, William E. Brumback, New England Wild Flower Society; 30-page handbook based on the original propagation research of Will C. Curtis, founder of the Garden in the Woods. This guide has been revised and updated and gives gardeners general information about how to start wildflowers, soil mixtures, and a variety of propagation methods, including a common name index and suggesting reading list. (\$5.45 postpaid) **CONTACT:** New England Wild Flower Society, Dept. WP, Garden in the Woods, Hemenway Road, Framingham, MA 01701.